



Coyote is Looking Ahead: assessment and plans for the future

In summer 2001, with the publication of the fifth issue and after 2 years of existence Coyote decided it was time for an in-depth evaluation of the magazine and for a fresh thought about its further development. The Coyote team sent out questionnaires to the readers asking them what they thought about the magazine. It then analysed the returned questionnaires in its team meeting in January 2002. In a parallel process, the Partnership institutions took a critical look at the magazine and formulated suggestions for future issues, which were also considered at the January meeting.

So what are the main outcomes?

by Sonja Mitter

What do the readers think about Coyote?

Basis for assessment

68 readers and contributors of Coyote returned the completed questionnaire to the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. Not many, considering that some 4000 copies of every issue are sent out and distributed and further articles are read through the web version of the magazine. Nevertheless it was enough to collect a sizeable number of comments and suggestions from people that had received on average 4 issues of the magazine.

Reader profile

Almost half of the readers returning the questionnaire described themselves as trainers; about 20 per cent each as participants in international and national training events. 9 per cent have a more institutional and administrative background.

How do you evaluate Coyote in general?

On average, Coyote is appreciated as a good magazine. This evaluation refers to aspects like the magazine in general, its variety of styles, quality of articles, layout and structure. Most readers find the timing of the publication of the two issues per year adequate; some would like to see a more frequent publication of 3-4 issues per year.

Which articles of the magazine do you read most?

All sections and articles were mentioned by at least some readers as those they were reading most. Overall, articles under the Training Methodology section are the most popular. They are followed by the interviews of Coyote meets Trainers, and then articles under the other main sections, which are read equally frequently.

What do you like best about Coyote?

The readers like best about Coyote: the expression of different points of view, the mixture of theory and practice, its variety; the informal spirit and fun and light-hearted approach while taking things seriously; that it brings the community together, is a forum for information and gives a voice to trainers and others directly involved in training. Many readers appreciate most the fact that Coyote exists at all.

How do you use Coyote?

Readers mostly use the information and ideas from Coyote as background knowledge for their work (50 %), but trainers are using the magazine also increasingly to prepare specific elements within training courses or seminars (26%). Moreover, some readers indicated that they were referring to Coyote articles in training events, others that they had translated articles into their mother tongue.

What are your suggestions for future issues of Coyote?

Many readers wish to see more possibilities for exchanging comments and information and a more open debate forum in the magazine. A more interactively designed web site was suggested as the most appropriate tool for this.

Several readers proposed a focus on selected major issues and to address and discuss those from different perspectives.

Further suggestions include: publish more articles about youth work at local level and overseas approaches; enlarge bibliographies and add book reviews; translate the magazine or at least summaries of articles into other languages, and give Spiffy (the coyote) a female as well as a male look.

What do the Partnership institutions suggest?

The Council of Europe and the European Commission would like to see Coyote develop into a more political tool in the future. This means that the magazine should more strongly reflect the political priorities of the institutions in the youth and training field. This should not however limit the contributors' freedom to express their views. The Partnership institutions also recommend stronger internal coherence within Coyote issues, for instance through defining one priority theme for each issue.

Underlying this interest is also the wish of the institutions to emphasise Coyote's character as a professional, rather than a youth magazine.



So how will Coyote develop in the future?

Looking at all these comments and suggestions, we, the Coyote editorial team, will be trying to create a new balance. We want to keep the informal tone of the magazine while adding a more professional outlook. Coyote should continue to raise a variety of issues and opinions, but we also intend to take up the proposal of readers and the institutions of defining priority themes in line with the political priorities of the institutions.

Starting with this issue, we will be including a new section in each Coyote issue, called Coyote Theme and focussing on one priority topic of political importance. The basic idea is to discuss one theme of larger relevance, look at it from different angles and give trainers, youth workers, policy makers, institutional representatives and other experts the possibility to express themselves, and the readers to compare different perspectives and opinions about it.

Coyote will also aim to increase its function to promote exchange and community building among different actors in the field of training youth. This means visualising on-going tendencies and developments at the level of the European institutions and organisations, but also strengthening links between the local, national and European levels of youth work and non-formal education. Moreover, Coyote wants to provide more information about related fields of training, e.g. youth research, formal education and other educational programmes at national or European level. The web site version of Coyote should be the main tool to promote exchange among readers and contributors.

To reach these objectives, the circle of Coyote contributors and readers needs to be broadened further. At the end of the day, we want to ensure that Coyote makes full use of its potential to be a major tool in European training strategy. As such it should promote the expression and development of the wide range of experiences, approaches and perspectives that exist in the field of practice and theory of training in youth work, in Europe and beyond.

What can you do to contribute to Coyote?

You can put up your comments about Coyote and about individual articles at the Training Youth Discussion Forum at www.training-youth.net, or you can contact us or the authors of articles directly at their contact address (indicated at the end of each article).

You can also write an article yourself. If you have an idea of a subject, please contact any member of the Coyote team and we will be happy to discuss it with you (for email addresses see Notes about the Contributors).

If you or your organisation have translated a Coyote article, please let us know and we can make it available to a larger group of people. Translations of Coyote articles that we know of are announced or put up on the Coyote web page.

We look forward to receiving your contributions!

Frank Marx, since 2000 administrator at the European Commission Directorate General Education and Culture, Unit D.1. – YOUTH, and, among others, responsible for the Partnership on European Youth Worker Training is leaving. Frank is taking up a new post in the Commission.

*Coyote says THANK YOU Frank,
and all the best for the future!*



At the time of finalising the editing of this Coyote issue it is not known yet who will take over responsibility for the Partnership in the European Commission. Coyote will publish this information in its next issue.